

# BRISTOL AND THE INDIAN INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT

ROHIT BAROT



# BRISTOL BRANCH OF THE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

## LOCAL HISTORY PAMPHLETS

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*Bristol and the Indian Independence Movement* is the seventieth pamphlet to be published by the Bristol Branch of the Historical Association. The author, Dr Rohit Barot, is a Lecturer in Sociology in the University of Bristol.

The photograph on the outside front cover is of the great Indian reformer Raja Rammohan Roy who died in Bristol in 1833. One of his friends, Miss Castle, had commissioned H.P. Briggs to make a full-size portrait of him in 1832. This was presented to the City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in 1841. It is reproduced here by kind permission of the Museum and Art Gallery. A marble monument in the style of a Hindu Temple was also designed to commemorate Roy. This was the work of William Prinsep and it is to be seen in Arnos Vale Cemetery to which Roy's remains were removed. The photograph was taken by Dr Barot. Photographs of Sukhsagar Datta were kindly supplied by Mr David Datta.

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The next pamphlet in the series will deal with the Bristol police force in the the later nineteenth century.

A list of pamphlets still in print is given on the inside back cover.

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INDEPENDENCE MOVEMENT



Although the formation of groups and associations among Indian people in Britain is often seen as the product of postwar labour migration to this country, Indians have in fact been visiting and living in Britain from the eighteenth century onwards, and when movements for Indian independence arose in the nineteenth century, Indians here had a very important contribution to make. It is the purpose of this pamphlet to examine the connection between Indians and Bristol with special reference to the remarkable careers of two men: Raja Rammohan Roy who died in the city in 1833 and Dr. Sukhsagar Datta who lived and worked in Bristol from just before the First World War until his death in 1967.<sup>1</sup>

As Rozina Visram has shown, Indians began to appear in Britain from the eighteenth century onwards as domestic servants, soldiers and sailors, but in the nineteenth century those who came to Bristol were primarily drawn from middle classes.<sup>2</sup> The East India Company had introduced a wide range of economic, political, educational and cultural changes into eighteenth-century Bengal, and there emerged from a number of dominant groups of

1. This study is part of a research project entitled *Migration, Social Change and Voluntary Associations among South Asians in Bristol*. I would like to thank the Economic and Social Science Research Council for a research grant (G00/23/2374) which supported this investigation. I am thankful to Anthea Sanyasi for making it possible for me to learn about Dr. Sukhsagar Datta. My special thanks are due to both Mr. David Datta and Dr. Albion Ajitkumar Datta for providing me with a rich body of information on their father's life and to Dr. Jyoti Berra for preparing a biographical sketch of Dwijadas Datta's life for this study. For comments on this revised manuscript, I would like to thank Professor Michael Banton and participants of Sociology section of British Association for the Advancement of Science meeting where this paper was first presented in 1986.
2. Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars and Princes : Indians in Britain 1700-1947*, 1986 London, Pluto Press, p.304.



Hindu origin a complex group which came to be known as *bhadralok* or respectable people.<sup>3</sup> The most prosperous and property-owning section of this group (*abhijat bhadralok*) constituted “one of the most important agencies for change in nineteenth century Bengal”. There was a lower stratum (*grihastha bhadralok*) drawn from “large shopkeepers, small traders, small landholders, and white collar workers in commercial houses and government offices, teachers, ‘native doctors’, journalists and writers”.<sup>4</sup>

The great Indian reformer Raja Rammohan Roy who came to England in 1830 was one of the most remarkable of these middle class Indians. He came to Bristol in 1833. A brief outline of his life and of those of his followers who came to Bristol will illustrate not only the effect of social change in Bengal but also the way in which such people increasingly accepted a rational and scientific outlook, a process which created much tension between the old order and the new.

Born in the family of a prosperous Brahmin landlord in Radhanagar village in the Burdwan district of Bengal in 1772, Roy was to make his mark as a critical thinker and a progressive reformer. As an able and keen student, besides his native language Bengali, Roy mastered Persian like his forefathers in order to qualify for government service and English when it superseded Persian as a language of the British Raj. He also studied Sanskrit to study the *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, Arabic to study the Quran, Hebrew to study the Old Testament and Greek for examining the New Testament. He also travelled as far as Tibet to learn something about Buddhism. As for his vital interaction with the British in Bengal, he worked as a secretary to John Digby, the East India Company Collector of Rangpur (1804–1814). Through this employment, as William Theodore de Bary notes, Roy “acquired a remarkable fluency in the English language, and rose as high as a non-British could in the Bengal Civil Service. His success as an administrator and an assured income from landed estates enabled him to retire at forty-two and settle permanently in Calcutta, then the political and intellectual capital of India”.<sup>5</sup>

3. S.N. Mukherjee, ‘Class, Caste and Politics in Calcutta 1815–38’ in Edmund Leach and S.N. Mukherjee’s (ed.) *Elites in South Asia*, 1970 Cambridge, p.35.

4. *Ibid.*, p.50 & 60.

5. William Theodore de Barry (ed.), *Sources of Indian Tradition* Volume II, New York, p.19.

After his return to Calcutta in 1815, Roy took an active interest in both education and reform. In 1823 when the Company government decided to establish and support a new college for Sanskrit studies, Roy was greatly shocked. In the debate between those who supported traditional oriental learning as opposed to those who favoured introduction of modern European knowledge in India, Roy was very much in support of modern education which was to be a key factor in the modernisation of Bengal. In a letter of petition he sent to Lord Amherst, Governor General in Council, expressing his concern about a considerable sum of money the government had set aside for instruction of Indian subjects, Roy said “We were filled with sanguine hopes that this sum would be laid out in employing European gentlemen of talent and education to instruct the natives of India in mathematics, natural philosophy, chemistry, anatomy and other useful sciences”<sup>6</sup> – a view which expressed the Bengali middle-class interest in modern education. He played an important part in the establishment of Hindu College in 1816 and also founded an English school of his own which trained middle-class Bengali children some of whom were to become leading dignitaries in Bengal and India. As a publisher of a Bengali and a Persian Weekly, Roy also vigorously campaigned against the Press Ordinance which the British authorities introduced to control publishing after the English editor of *Calcutta Journal* had criticised a government appointment. The editor was asked to leave India and the Privy Council rejected Roy’s petition on this matter in 1828.<sup>7</sup>

Roy also opposed the traditional Hindu practice of worshipping many gods and goddesses. Using his knowledge of ancient Hindu texts *Vedas* and *Upanishads*, Roy argued for one supreme being as a basis of religion. He publicised this view in his first book *Tuhfatul Muwahhidin* and criticised the traditional idol-worship of the Hindus as well as the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. Roy’s belief in one supreme being eventually led him to form a modern religious movement called Brahma Samaj in 1828.<sup>8</sup>

6. *Ibid.*, p.41.

7. D.S. Sarma, *Studies in the Renaissance of Hinduism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, Benares, p.686. Especially see Chapter 2 ‘Ram Mohan Roy and the Brahma Samaj’, p.86 *et al.*

8. For a brief account of Brahma Samaj, see J.N. Farquhar’s ‘Brahmo Samaj’ in James Hastings’ (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics*, Volume 2, 1909,



Having been influenced by modern ideas, Brahma Samaj challenged centuries-old social and religious traditions among the Hindus, especially in rejection of the caste system. The orthodox Hindus opposed Brahma Samaj, as the father of Dr. Sukhsagar Datta was to find out in the later part of the nineteenth century. As a great Indian reformer, Roy is best remembered for his vigorous campaign against the Indian practice of burning the widow on her husband's funeral pyre, the custom of *suttee*. When Roy's sister-in-law became a *suttee*, Roy was deeply shocked and resolved to campaign for the abolition of what was increasingly recognised as an inhuman custom. Although the orthodox Hindus opposed abolition, Roy was eventually successful in his crusade when Lord William Bentinck abolished *suttee* by law in 1829.

After his reforming campaigns against *suttee*, caste and idol worship, he notes in a letter to Mr. Gordon "I now felt a strong wish to visit Europe and obtain by personal observation, a more thorough insight into its manners, customs, religion and political institutions".<sup>9</sup> Apart from this general curiosity, he had three particular reasons for visiting England in 1830. First, the charter of East India Company was going to come up for discussion and renewal. Roy wanted to influence this discussion as the new charter was to have long term effects on Indians and their future government. Further, orthodox Hindus had opposed the law abolishing *suttee* in 1829 and their appeal against it was going to be heard before the Privy Council. Roy was keen to ensure that the appeal was turned down. Thirdly, the titular Mogul Emperor Abu-nasar Muinuddin Akbar had asked him to press for an increase in his annual emolument. To pursue these aims, he sailed from Calcutta on 15 November 1830 on board the *Albion* bound for Liverpool along with his son Rajaram and two servants Ramrattan and Ramhare. He reached England on 8 April 1831. During his long stay in the country, he met many dignitaries,

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Edinburgh, pp.813-824. Also Sivnath Sastri, *The Brahma Samaj : Religious Principles and Brief History*, Calcutta, 1958, Sadharan Brahma Samaj, p.45, and Hem Chandra Sarkar's *The Religion of the Brahma Samaj*, 1911 (1931 Edition), Calcutta, p.75.

9. See Appendix A in Mary Carpenter's (ed.) *The Last Days in England of the Rajah Rammohun Roy*, 1866, p.255. See also pp.246-255. This volume is an important source of information about Raja Rammohan Roy's time in England.

including the King at whose coronation he was assigned a seat. When the renewal of the charter of East India Company came up, he was invited to appear before a Select Committee to present his views on India. He also witnessed the Privy Council rejecting the appeal against the abolition of the *suttee*. The East India Company raised the annual allowance of the Mogul Emperor, and Roy had been successful in fulfilling his aims.

Rammohan Roy came to Bristol in early September 1833 to visit his Unitarian friend Dr. Lant Carpenter. As he made a deep impression on Lant Carpenter's daughter Mary Carpenter, she became interested in India and Indians and was to attract many Indian visitors to Bristol during her lifetime. Roy stayed at Beach House, Stapleton Grove (now Purdown Hospital) with Miss Castle and Miss Kiddell.<sup>10</sup> He worshipped at Lewins Mead Meeting House where a plaque commemorates the fact that he had preached there. In her description of last days of Roy's life in Bristol, Mary Carpenter provided a detailed and touching account of his illness and death. Soon after he fell ill, Dr. Estlin of Park Street recognised that he suffered from meningitis and in ten days time Roy died on 27 September 1833. His friends and Indian servants saw him buried at Stapleton Grove. The association between Roy and his final days in Bristol is permanently enshrined in Bristol. Miss Castle had commissioned H.P. Briggs in 1832 to do a full-size portrait which was presented to City of Bristol Museum and Art Gallery in 1841 by her aunt Miss Kiddell. This magnificent portrait of Roy is now on permanent display at the Museum. An associate and staunch supporter of Roy was Dwarkanath Tagore, the grandfather of Rabindranath Tagore, and a wealthy landlord who visited Bristol in 1843. He arranged to transfer the remains of his guru from Stapleton Grove to Arnos Vale cemetery in Bristol. Dwarkanath Tagore then commissioned a designer William Prinsep to erect a marble monument in the style of a Hindu temple as a permanent memorial. In the later part of the twentieth century, this memorial was to acquire significance as a site where Indians would go on a day-long pilgrimage on every 27 September to remember and honour this great Indian.

In describing Roy as "the greatest creative personality of nineteenth century India", Percival Spear argues that Roy's public activities from 1813 to 1830 "laid down the main lines of advance

10. *Ibid.*, p.113 *et al.*

for what was to become the Indian national movement". As for his response to the West, Percival Spear adds "His attitude towards the West was neither that of surrender, withdrawal or conflict. It was one of comprehension. The new world from the West was not to be a substitute but a supplement to the old. Synthesis, which is different from syncretism, was his remedy for the predicament of Hinduism. The instrument of synthesis was reason, the principle he found enshrined in the *Upanishads*. A Hindu could accept the moral rationalism of the West because real Hinduism was both moral and rational". This process of synthesis, as Percival Spear explains, "provided the rising westernised class with just that bridge between their new and old mental worlds which they needed".<sup>11</sup>

In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Bristol attracted many young Bengali visitors. Several of them like Dwarkanath Tagore were followers of Roy. Bristol Unitarians, Mary Carpenter in particular, invited educated Bengalis to Bristol<sup>12</sup> often assuming that Christian influence on the Indian elite would pave the way for the spread of Christianity among the masses. They included a Bengali Brahmin Joguth Chunder Gungooly who had been ordained at Boston on 16 June 1860 by American Unitarians. He spent six months in England and visited Mary Carpenter at the Red Lodge at Christmas.<sup>13</sup> When the British allowed the Indians to hold higher positions in the colonial administration under the Indian Civil Service Act of 1861, among the first batch of students who appeared for competitive examination in London was Manmohan Ghosh. He was able to accompany Mary Carpenter on her voyage to India where she spent three years and greatly influenced the education of Indian women. As Saywell notes, "The Mary Carpenter Hall attached to the Brahma Girls School in Calcutta was a memorial to her support for the education of women in India".<sup>14</sup> Among the numerous Indians Mary met in Bengal was

11. Percival Spear, *The Oxford History of Modern India 1740–1975*, 1978 Delhi, p.289.
12. Bishop Norman Carr Sargant, *Mary Carpenter in India*, 1985 Bristol (An unpublished manuscript in Bristol Record Office). Also see his 'Mary Carpenter of Bristol (1807–1877) and her connection with India through Ram Mohan Roy, K.C. Sen and the National Indian Association' in *Church History Review*, Volume XII, No 2, 1978, pp.121–133.
13. Bishop Norman Carr Sargant, 1985, *op.cit.*, p.39.
14. Ruby J. Saywell, *Mary Carpenter of Bristol*, 1964 Bristol, p.19.

Keshub Chunder Sen whose life was going to influence the Datta family and their break from the traditional and orthodox Hindu fold.

After Roy, the most notable person to visit Mary Carpenter was Keshub Chunder Sen. When he came to England, he was bound to pay a visit to the monument Dwarkanath Tagore had erected in memory of Roy. As he had already met Mary Carpenter in India, the combination of these two factors was to bring him to Bristol which he visited twice, in June and September 1870.

When Keshub Chunder Sen came to Bristol in June 1870, Mary Carpenter received him at the Red Lodge. He preached a sermon at Lewins Mead Meeting House and visited Roy's grave at Arnos Vale. Mary also arranged for him to present his views on Brahma Samaj and Christianity at a meeting arranged at Red Lodge which was attended by 150 guests. It was proposed at this meeting that an association, which Keshub Chunder Sen would cooperate with, should be formed to help Indians to better their lot.<sup>15</sup> Sen agreed to assist such an association and also urged his audience to support the education of women in India.<sup>16</sup>

On his second visit to Bristol on 9 September 1870, Keshub Chunder Sen witnessed the inauguration of the Bristol Indian Association which was not in any way connected to the Association which the Bristol Indians were going to form in 1947. The founding members of this late nineteenth century association proposed the following objectives for the association:

“To promote by voluntary effort the enlightenment and improvement of their countrymen.

To extend our knowledge of India, and interest in her throughout our country.

To cooperate with enlightened natives of India in their efforts for improvement of their countrymen.

To obtain parliamentary action where necessary.

To show kind attentions to young natives of India who were in Great Britain for their education”.<sup>17</sup>

The General Committee of the Association identified the ‘wants’

15. Prem Sunder Basu, *Keshub Chunder Sen in England*, 1871 Calcutta (1980 Reprint), p.277.

16. *Ibid.*, p.277.

17. *Ibid.*, p.434.

of India as being the education of masses and of women, sanitary improvements, improvements of discipline in prisons and the establishment of juvenile reformatories, and the promotion of friendly relationship with Indians in England. On 24 March 1871 it was decided that the Association should have a London branch which was called the National Indian Association. The organisation was to last for fifty years. Mary Carpenter had hoped that Keshub Chunder Sen would form a branch of the Association in Calcutta. Instead he established a separate body called the Indian Reform Association. This precluded further collaboration between him and Mary Carpenter.

Another member of Brahma Samaj to visit Bristol during this period was Sashipada Banerjee. He had travelled to Birmingham, Walsall, Manchester, Bolton and Liverpool to address meetings. He and his wife visited Mary Carpenter in 1871 at the Red Lodge where Banerjee's wife gave birth to a son. As Rozina Visram notes "In the words of the Journal of the National Indian Association, 'as this is the first Brahmin subject of Her Majesty Queen Victoria born on British ground, he bears the name Albion in commemoration of this event'".<sup>18</sup>

Another nineteenth-century visitor to the West country was Sukhsagar Datta's father Dwijadas Datta. He was also influenced by Brahma Samaj and, like many educated middle-class Bengalis, he broke away from the traditional Hindu community.

According to his son's biographical notes,<sup>19</sup> Dwijadas Datta was born into the famous Datta family of Kalikutch, Tripura in Bengal in 1856 just before the Indian mutiny. His father Gangadas, who was a tax collector, was disappointed that the mutiny had failed to free India from British rule. He therefore decided to give up everything and use his wealth for religious purposes. As he spent sixty thousand rupees from tax receipts for religious services, the landlord confiscated much of his land and property. Dwijadas grew up in Kalikutch. Although he had left school after a teacher had caned him, he proved himself to be a bright student. He studied away from home at Dhaka to prepare for a University entrance examination. It was then through Mr. Nandi that he began to attend religious services at the local Brahma Samaj temple. When his father learned about his involvement in Brahma

18. Rozina Visram, *op.cit.*, p.172.

19. Ullaskar Datta's undated biographical notes in Bengali. I am thankful to Pabitra Ghosh for his English translation of these notes.

Samaj, he was deeply disturbed. To express his disapproval, he compelled Dwijadas to sit and eat separately from rest of the family to indicate that he had incurred the stigma of pollution by participating in a movement opposed to Hinduism. His mother Shivsundari had to destroy all the earthen pots used for cooking food for the son who had become defiled. When Dwijadas fell in love with Mr. Nandi's thirteen-year old daughter Muktakeshi, his father was horrified. On the day when the couple was due to marry, Gangadas gave a good hiding to his son and locked him up. Dwijadas managed to escape with Mr. Nandi's assistance and married Muktakeshi according to Brahma Samaj rituals. Gangadas disowned him and expelled him from the family fold. However, in the later years, Dwijadas was able to reestablish his link with the family. Conversion to Brahma Samaj had greatly influenced Dwijadas's thinking. He developed a secular and rational outlook which was reconciled to the teaching from the *Vedas* and *Upanishads* as embodied in the precepts of Brahma Samaj. Subsequently, he obtained two first-class M.A. degrees from Calcutta University and secured a scholarship from the Imperial Government to study agriculture in England. He joined the Royal College of Agriculture in Cirencester in 1886 for a two-year course of study. As an old man, Dwijadas was to remind his son Sukhsagar that he had visited Bristol and that he could still remember Clifton Suspension Bridge! It is most likely that Dwijadas lived in England after 1888. In his book *Rig Veda Unveiled* he refers to a conversation in 1889 that he had about Keshub Chunder Sen with Max Müller, then a Professor of Sanskrit at Oxford.<sup>20</sup> Upon his return to India, Dwijadas held various posts. He was a lecturer at Bethune College in Calcutta; then principal of Shibpore Engineering College and lastly a deputy magistrate.

The list of books he published clearly demonstrates that he was a good scholar of Sanskrit and Persian.<sup>21</sup> In his *Peasant Proprietorship in India* and *Landlordism in India* Dwijadas showed his grasp of historical method and his knowledge of the sources relating to peasant proprietorship. Using both Hindu and Islamic sources, he argued that historically it was the cultivating peasant

20. Dwijadas Datta, *Rigveda Unveiled*, 1934.

21. These are as follows: 1 *Rigveda Unveiled* (1934) 2 *Lectures on Vedantism and Vedanta*. 3 *Purusa-Sukta*. 4 *Behold the Man – a reminiscence of Brahmananda Keshub Chunder Sen*. 5 *Peasant Proprietorship in India* (1933) 6 *Landlordism in India* (1931).

who was the proprietor of land. Landlordism should be abolished and the peasants should set up cooperatives to organise production. In his *Rig Veda Unveiled* he argued that this ancient text did not legitimate the status of untouchables nor did it provide for a hierarchical caste system. Asserting the unity of religions, he concluded, “true Christianity, true Islam and true Hinduism are in essence one”, and he established a Hall of Harmony of Religions at Comilla on 10 October 1931.<sup>22</sup>

Dwijadas Datta had five children in all. There were three sons and two daughters. The sons were Mohini Mohan, Ullaskar and Sukhsagar. Resistance to British colonial rule was to play a crucial part in Sukhsagar Datta’s visit to England and his permanent settlement in Bristol. To understand this, it is important to examine Sukhsagar’s elder brother Ullaskar and his activities which influenced Sukhsagar’s move to Britain in about 1907.

At the beginning of what Percival Spear describes as “the Indian Edwardian era”<sup>23</sup> in 1900 a limited segment of the middle-class population was influenced by Indian nationalism. There were a number of events which extended the scope of nationalism among the middle classes. As W.H. Moreland and Atul Chatterjee note, the British suffered defeats in the earlier part of the Boer War between 1899–1902 and the Indians began to see British rule as less invincible than before. Many regarded Japanese military successes against Russia (1904–1905) as being the victory of Asia over Europe.<sup>24</sup> When Lord Curzon partitioned Bengal in 1905 to improve the efficiency of administration, middle class Bengalis saw this as dismemberment of their motherland. Resentment against partition combined with the pressure of middle class unemployment<sup>25</sup> generated political agitation which in turn led to the boycott of British goods. This encouraged the Swadeshi movement which demanded that the Indians should only use things made in India. As Percival Spear has observed, combination of these issues “served to draw the new class together and to create a new sense of unity and common purpose”.<sup>26</sup> The Congress Party which had been founded in 1885 rapidly grew in stature and soon found itself

22. Dwijadas Datta, *Rigveda Unveiled*, 1934, p.341.

23. Percival Spear, *op.cit.*, p.338.

24. W.H. Moreland and Atul Chandra Chatterjee, *A Short History of India*, London 1945, p.429.

25. *Ibid.*, p.449.

26. Percival Spear, *op.cit.*, p.338.

in a state of tension between moderates who demanded greater autonomy through constitutional changes and extremists who were prepared to put up uncompromising opposition to government through the use of violence if necessary. Radical leader like Bal Gangadhar Tilak supported the idea of political change through violence. Many of his followers, some of whom were progressive and high-caste Chitpavan Brahmins of Maharashtra, were prepared to use violence for political ends.<sup>27</sup>

The revolutionary movement in Bengal commenced when Barindra Kumar Ghosh, who was born in England in 1880, came to Calcutta. Barindra's social background was distinctively middle class as his father was a medical officer and his brother had obtained a first-class degree in the classical tripos at Cambridge University. When Bengalis were agitating against partition, Barindra aimed at organising a violent revolutionary movement to overthrow the British government in India. He appealed mainly to students of upper middle class background and he began recruiting in order to train his followers in the use of arms and explosives. As he subsequently stated in his trial, "We were always thinking of a far off revolution and wish to be ready for it, so we were collecting weapons in small quantities. Altogether I have collected 11 revolvers, 4 rifles and 1 gun. Among other young men who came to be admitted to our circle was Ullaskar Datta. He said that he wanted to come among us and be useful, he had learned the preparation of explosives. He had a small laboratory in his house without his father's knowledge and he experimented there. I never saw it. He told me of it. With his help, we began preparing explosives in small quantities in the garden house at 32 Murari-pukur Road". His associate Upendra Nath also stated, "I knew that Barindra, Ullaskar and Hem were engaged in manufacturing bombs with a view to do away with the lives of those Government officials who by repressive measures hampered our work, viz., the Lieutenant-Governor and Mr. Kingsford"<sup>28</sup> who was an unpopular magistrate.

Ullaskar Datta had been born on 16 April 1886 in the village of Kalikutch in Tripura district now in Bangladesh. After passing his matriculation examination in Sibpore in 1903, he joined the

27. S.A.T. Rowlatt, *Sedition Committee 1918 Report*, 1918 Calcutta, Superintendent, Government Printing, India. See Chapter 1 'Revolutionary conspiracies in Bombay'.

28. *Ibid.*, p.20.



Presidency College in Calcutta. An incident at the college radically changed him just before he was due to take his examinations. An English professor by the name of Dr Russell made some derogatory and insulting remarks about Indians in Ullaskar's class. Ullaskar reacted defiantly and criticised the British. In protest, he gave up his European-style clothing and began to live like an ordinary simple Bengali. His father and family urged him to sit for his examinations, but Ullaskar would accept no compromises. The family and friends persuaded him to study textile technology in Bombay. Such a study was compatible with the aims of Swadeshi movement which encouraged and supported the local Indian manufacture. At the same time Ullaskar observed that colonial police ill-treated Indians and frequently imprisoned them, and this convinced him that he had to make his contribution to free India from British rule. In his own biographical notes he made later in his life<sup>29</sup> Ullaskar describes how his father gave him five hundred rupees to be used for a good cause and how he handed over this amount to Barindra Kumar Ghosh who led a revolutionary group called Yugantar. Ullaskar gave up his study in Bombay and became an active member of this group. As his biographer Sobhana Nandi has noted, fun-loving and gregarious Ullaskar changed and became more grave and introspective. Once while he was away from home, his younger brother Sukhsagar discovered a metal ball under the bed in Ullaskar's bedroom. He picked it up and threw it at a nearby tree causing a terrific explosion and much smoke. The matter was hushed up but the family now knew that Ullaskar was dealing with explosives.<sup>30</sup>

Barindra Kumar Ghosh and his associates including Ullaskar were arrested on 2 May 1908 at Muraripukur Garden House for making the explosives which had accidentally killed Mrs. Kennedy and Miss Kennedy instead of Mr. Kingsford for whom it was intended. They were all charged, as Ullaskar has put it in his biography, "with conspiracy and waging war against the King Emperor".<sup>31</sup> After a long trial known as Alipore Conspiracy case, Ullaskar was sentenced to death. He refused to appeal against the

29. Ullaskar Datta's undated biographical notes.

30. Shobhana Nandi, 'Datta Ullaskar 1885-1965' in S.P. Sen's (ed.) *Dictionary of National Biographies*, 1972, Calcutta, Institute of Historical Studies, pp.399-401.

31. Ullaskar Datta, *Twelve Years of Prison Life*, 1924, Calcutta, p.292. See publisher's note.

death sentence as he was unwilling to accept the legitimacy of the British judicial system. Barindra Kumar and the members of his family finally persuaded him to change his mind to minimise misery and suffering for other defendants. On appeal the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment in the Andaman Islands. In his autobiographical account *Twelve Years of Prison Life* Ullaskar provides a sensitive and touching account of his long confinement and the way rigorous labour and disciplinary punishment affected his mind and body.

After the First World War, the Government of India declared a general amnesty under which Ullaskar was released from prison. He returned home but took no further part in politics in the years before his death in 1965. However, he firmly held his belief in revolution and viewed Gandhian politics of non-violence with some contempt. He also refused to accept a Government of India pension for those, who, like himself, had suffered during pre-independence struggles. He did not believe that a price tag could be attached to the sacrifices he and others had made for freedom.

Ullaskar's association with Barindra Kumar Ghosh and his involvement in revolutionary activities greatly affected the destiny of the Datta family. Dwijadas Datta was promptly retired without pension as the authorities assumed that he had known about the 'terroristic' activities of his son. Later on, when it was proved that he knew nothing of such activities, his pension was restored, but he was not employed again in the government service. Ullaskar's elder brother Mohini Mohan was in the United States studying agriculture when these events afflicted the family. He was promised a government post upon his return, but when he got back, no job was waiting for him. Apparently, he had sent some Chemistry books to Ullaskar, who, it was believed, had used them for making explosives. Although Mohini Mohan was unaware of his brother's involvement in anti-government agitation, the authorities thought otherwise. To support himself and his family, Mohini Mohan started a business with his father's assistance.

Sukhsagar Datta who was born in 1890 was scarcely beyond his teens when his brother Ullaskar whom he greatly admired was sent to serve his long prison sentence in the Andaman Islands. As he was living at the same boarding house where Ullaskar was arrested, his mother Muktakeshi feared that the police would arrest him as well. To ensure his safety, she gave him some money and asked him to leave for England. After travelling to Delhi, young Sukhsagar was homesick and returned to Calcutta. Far from

being pleased to see him, Muktakeshi was distressed and said to him, "Please go away to England. I do not wish to lose another son to British Raj". Accepting his mother's plea, Sukhsagar Datta travelled to England some time between 1908 and 1910.

In London Sukhsagar Datta came in contact with one of the members of the Bloomsbury group<sup>32</sup> which included Keynes, Strachey and E.M. Forster as well as the writer David Garnett who recalls his first meeting with Datta,<sup>33</sup> who called himself Dutt at this time, at the London Tutorial College: "I first noticed a brown young man with a head of luxuriant black ringlets".<sup>34</sup> Garnett thought Sukhsagar was a Madagascan. Sukhsagar and David became friendly and David was invited to tea at 140 Sinclair Road in Shepherds Bush where he met Sukhsagar's companions Naranjan Pal, Ashutosh Mitter and Bepin Chandra Pal. They met regularly and became sufficiently friendly for David Garnett to know that Sukhsagar's brother was involved in the Alipore Conspiracy case and that the bomb he had made killed two English ladies. As Garnett explains, although Sukhsagar wished to oppose British rule in India, the death of two English women and the assassination of others along with Ullaskar's long imprisonment had "set Dutt profoundly against terrorists and terrorism at a time when the awakening nationalism was expressing itself in a spasmodic series of murders".<sup>35</sup>

Garnett also informs us that Sukhsagar had been instructed to read for the bar "but the idea was repugnant to him".<sup>36</sup> Instead he wanted to become an actor so that he could eventually set up his own theatre company in India to stage European plays in vernacular languages.

Sukhsagar Datta knew a fair number of nationalists and revolutionaries who had made London their temporary home to propagate the cause of Indian independence or to seek refuge from the British Indian authorities. One such a nationalist was Shyamji Krishnavarma, a native of Kathiawar in Gujarat, who came to Britain

32. Margaret Drabble (ed.), *The Oxford Companion to English Literature*, 1985, Oxford, p.110.

33. David Garnett, *The Golden Echo* 1953, London, p.272. See Chapter 7 which describes David Garnett's encounter with Indians in London at the turn of this century.

34. *Ibid.*, p.140.

35. *Ibid.*, p.140.

36. *Ibid.*, p.140.



Sukhsagar Datta, aged about 17.

*Photograph supplied by David Datta*

and started in London the India Home Rule Society of which he was the President. The Society published journal called the *Indian Sociologist* to publicise home rule for India and for "carrying genuine propaganda in England by all practical means".<sup>37</sup> Its base was India House in London and the authorities regarded it as a notorious centre of sedition.

In July 1907, the government was asked in the House of Commons whether it proposed to take any action against Krishnavarma, who left for Paris from where he continued his campaign. Sukhsagar Datta certainly knew Krishnavarma and India House, and after a member of the India House group had assassinated Colonel Sir William Curzon Wylie at the Imperial Institute in London in mistake for Lord Curzon, the police closed India House and shadowed all those associated with it including Sukhsagar Datta.

After the India House episode, Sukhsagar shared accommodation with the Indian nationalist Savarkar in what Garnett describes as "an extremely dirty Indian restaurant in Red Lion Passage".<sup>38</sup> Savarkar persuaded Sukhsagar and his friend to help Abdul Krim of the Riff tribe in Morocco which was resisting the Spanish occupation of their lands. Sukhsagar borrowed a Winchester rifle from David Garnett, but it was impounded by custom officials at Gibraltar. He then went on to Algiers but was unable to reach the Riffs and returned discouraged to England. Savarkar's brother had been implicated in an assassination in India and Sukhsagar decided that he wanted no more to do with him or any of his group.<sup>39</sup>

Some time in 1910–11 Sukhsagar met Ruby Young of Bristol. Ruby had grown up in a strict puritanical Seventh Day Adventist household in the St. Pauls district of Bristol. It seems probable that she decided to break away from the strict background in which she had been brought up and left Bristol for London where she met Sukhsagar either at a boarding house or in Red Lion Square. The meeting was one of love at first sight, followed by romantic courting. Subsequently the couple registered their marriage. It is during this phase that Sukhsagar appears to have revived his interest in dramatics. Under the influence of the

37. S.A.T. Rowlatt, *op.cit.*, p.5 describes activities of Indian students in London at the turn of this century.

38. David Garnett, *op.cit.*, p.148.

39. *Ibid.*, p.141.





Sukhsagar Datta, his wife Ruby, his sons Albion and David, c. 1913.

*Photograph supplied by David Datta*

Garnett family, he had been introduced to a wide range of European culture encompassing arts, sciences and philosophy. Ruby was also keenly interested in music and played the piano. Having been deeply impressed and moved by the beauty of Italian operatic singing, Sukhsagar decided that he should learn this art in Italy. He and Ruby then travelled to Milan and he joined the school run by the famous singing teacher Maestro Sabatini while Ruby worked for Fratelli Münster to support them. After a time, Sukhsagar decided that he was unlikely to develop a level of skill in singing demanded by the opera master and the critical Italian audience. He gave up operatic singing. His decision to leave Italy for England may have been influenced by the fact that Ruby was pregnant and expecting their first child. Although Sukhsagar was not successful in fulfilling his theatrical ambition, the training in operatic singing was to prove an asset in the political speeches he was going to deliver in Bristol.

Ruby Young brought Sukhsagar Datta to her parents' household in St. Pauls in Bristol. Her family warmly accepted him and helped him to make progress in education and become involved in politics. Ullaskar's life imprisonment had deeply influenced Sukhsagar and he had a passionate commitment to seeing India become an independent nation.

Ruby's parents and grandparents came from a Gloucestershire farming background and ran a dairy in Picton Street, Montpellier where they lived in Ashley Road. Although the family followed a rigid code of behaviour, the sisters were to follow a less conventional path. Ruby had already taken a bold step in marrying Sukhsagar. One of her sisters married an Afro-Caribbean friend of Sukhsagar from Jamaica who was engaged in technical training in Bristol. She eventually left England to make Jamaica her permanent home. Ruby's younger sister married Pastor Sammy Joyce, an Ulsterman who ended up leading the Seventh Day Adventist church in California. There is no doubt that Ruby's family became very fond of Sukhsagar. Being rural folk, the family had never been involved in colonial or imperial service and were not racists. They liked Sukhsagar and supported him and Ruby until they were able to establish their own independent household.

Sukhsagar Datta was now concerned about acquiring formal qualifications which could enable him to find satisfactory work in Bristol. To pursue his educational aims, he joined the Merchant Venturers' Technical College in 1913 or 1914. As a relatively older student in a final class, he passed his University of Bristol

Matriculation examination in 1914 having studied Mathematics, English Grammar and Composition, Italian, Physics and Chemistry. Then he joined University of Bristol Medical School in the following year to read for a degree in medicine. He was admitted to Medical School on 26 April 1915, passed his final examination in 1919 and formally qualified as a doctor by 22 October 1920. Later in the twenties, he studied for an M.D. in medicine and qualified in 1931. Subsequently he was one of the first to do an examination for a new Diploma in Psychiatric Medicine as psychiatry had become professionally acceptable to the General Medical Council.

From the family records, it is certain that Dr. Datta had joined Bristol General Hospital as a House Physician in 1920 at the time when Indian doctors were rare in British medical practice. In a letter of recommendation for Sukhsagar, W.H.G. Newham of Bristol described him as my “gynaecological clerk” and as being a good worker when he applied for the post of Assistant Medical Officer at Southmead Poor Law Institution. The Assistant Medical Officer was also required to be resident at Stapleton Institution (now Manor Park Hospital) “in which there will be about 600 imbeciles and a few chronic aged infirm cases”. The post carried a handsome remuneration of £300 per annum including furnished room, board and washing facility. Dr. Datta joined Southmead Infirmary in 1921 and worked there till 1922. Then he became a Senior Medical Officer at Manor Park Hospital until his retirement in 1956. In her pamphlet on Manor Park Hospital, Jean Nelson noted that “For many years, Dr. Datta was the only doctor responsible for the care of those in Stapleton Institution, Downend Children’s home and Snowdon Road Children’s home. He lived in a house opposite the main gate and an ambulant patient did his housework”.<sup>40</sup> Dr. Datta must have undertaken a wide range of medical work. During the war period, he once narrowly escaped from death from a German Messerschmitt which crashed near his office in the grounds of Manor Park Hospital.<sup>41</sup>

Sukhsagar also found time to offer his medical skills to the wider Bristol community on a voluntary basis through St. John’s Ambulance Brigade. A letter written to the Datta family by a Brigade official shows that Sukhsagar began serving the Brigade in

40. Jean Nelson, *A History of Manor Park Hospital : 150 Years of Caring*, Bristol, 1982, see p.8 in particular.

41. David Datta’s letter to *Bristol Evening Post*, 4 October 1986.



1937 when Indira Gandhi, who was to become the future Prime Minister of India, had come to Bristol in the same year to join Badminton School. Sukhsagar continued to assist the Brigade well beyond his official retirement date. As his Brigade associate Mr. George Creech recalled, "I knew Dr. Datta as a surgeon who had played an active part in the Civil Defense measures the government had introduced during the war period. Dr. Datta had taken full part in anti-gas measures and had trained hundreds of Bristol men and women in application of First Aid and was known to thousands for his work".<sup>42</sup> Mr. Creech also recalled Sukhsagar's warm and friendly disposition which made him very popular. He was the First Divisional Superintendent and Surgeon of the Transport and Cleansing Ambulance Division of the Brigade. In 1949 he became the surgeon of Fishponds Ambulance Division and three years later on 26 July 1951 the Brigade honoured him with the award of Serving Brother. In 1959 he became Officer Brother of St. John, an award which recognised his lifelong dedication to the work of St. John's Ambulance Brigade.

Since the days of Ullaskar's involvement in the Bengal civil disobedience movement and his confinement in prison, Sukhsagar had committed himself to the goal of Indian independence. His association with Indian nationalists in London at the turn of the century was an indication of his own deeply felt passion for freedom of India. From the beginning, like many Indians, Sukhsagar believed that the British Labour movement was more likely to be sympathetic to the idea of an independent India than any other British political party. The Russian revolution had provided a powerful stimulus to socialist thinking at the time, and Sukhsagar seems to have been committed to such a philosophical position from the earliest phase of his political development. In the early twenties in Bristol, he was already familiar with theoretical ideas of Marx, Engels and Lenin. In addition to his study of Marx's *Capital* and *Selected Correspondence of Marx and Engels*, he had also studied *Engels's Feuerbach : The Roots of the Socialist Philosophy* and Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. He was familiar with Lenin's biography and had carefully studied R. Palme Dutt's *India Today* when it first appeared in 1940. His detailed notes in his copy of this book shows that he had immersed himself in the analysis of capitalist development in India. He also read Freud as well as Jung, Adler and other

42. Mr. George Creech's personal communication to the author in 1986.



Sukhsagar Datta in the uniform of an Officer Brother of the St. John's Ambulance Corps.

*Photograph supplied by David Datta*

psychoanalysts. With this pattern of political thinking, it is not surprising that he joined the Labour Party in 1926 to advance his political influence. He took an active part in the Bristol Labour Party both to advance socialist politics in Britain and to argue for Indian independence. He became the Chairman of Bristol North Labour Party<sup>43</sup> in 1946 and subsequently rose to the rank of Chairman of Bristol Borough Labour Party. In 1946–47, he became the President of the Bristol Trades Council and at one stage led the Cooperative Party as its first President.

As well as participating actively in the Labour Movement, Dr. Datta also joined the London-based India League in 1930s. In 1932, Krishna Menon had transformed the Commonwealth of India League, inspired by the theosophist Annie Beasant, into the India League which was then openly and militantly committed to complete independence for India.<sup>44</sup> Supported by leading and progressive members of the Labour Party, the India League became an official arm of the Indian National Congress to mobilise British support for Indian independence. Dr. Datta maintained close association with the India League and Krishna Menon who frequently visited Bristol. A Bhattra Sikh, Giani Shree Ratan Singh Shad, who had come to Britain in 1936 and was later to settle in Bristol, recalls meeting Dr. Datta at Hyde Park rallies of India League where he often spoke to advance the cause of freedom of India. As a Chairman of Bristol Borough Labour Party, Dr. Datta had known a number of leading Labour politicians including Sir Stafford Cripps whom he had met locally in Bristol and for whose election to the Parliament he had campaigned.

Dr. Datta was very much an internationalist at heart. Although freedom of India was one of his main concerns, his political work in Bristol was not restricted to campaigning for Indian independence only. As a lively member of the party, he spoke on local and national issues at political rallies on Clifton Downs. He led marches with Trade Unionists and actively helped Labour supporters from Wales who were marching to London in 1930s. He often loaned his car to union officials to enable them to perform their duties speedily and efficiently. The Labour Party in Bristol was a

43. *The Bristol Labour Weekly*, 23.2.1946.

44. Marie Seton, *Panditji : A Portrait of Jawaharlal Nehru*, 1967 London. See pp.60–61.

lively, vibrant and active organisation both during the depression years and in the war period. Past issues of the *Bristol Labour Weekly* demonstrate this clearly. Sukhsagar often wrote for the *Weekly* and his short articles show that his interests were wide and diverse. For example, in 1944, he reviewed the American election to explain Dewey's defeat, arguing that the American Labour movement had played a decisive part in Roosevelt's victory.<sup>45</sup> Once he also wrote an analytical article to show that Marx clearly distinguished between communism and socialism in relation to inequality of wages.<sup>46</sup>

As the momentum for Indian independence was gathering in India and Britain, Dr. Datta had his most important opportunity to influence this cause. Having stimulated interest in Indian independence in the local Labour Movement, he was successful in asking the local party to support a National Union of Railwaymen's resolution at the 1944 National Conference of the Labour Party. The NUR representative Mr. C.W. Bridges moved the following:

"This conference, being of the opinion that the granting of freedom to the people of India to establish an Independent Indian National Government will be a decisive factor in the fight against Fascism and towards the unification of all anti-Fascist forces, urges the immediate ending of political deadlock by negotiation with all leaders of the Indian people with a view to the formation of responsible national government which will rally the entire population of India to the anti-Facist cause. With a view to facilitating the negotiations we call for the release of the Indian political leaders".<sup>47</sup>

Dr. Sukhsagar Datta seconded this historic resolution and in a moving speech urged the Party Executive to support it. First, he reminded the conference that three years earlier the National Executive had adopted a policy that the Indians must be given full responsibility at the centre and in the provinces and pointed out that Executive's demand in the statement had not been followed up. In his passionate appeal to the National Conference, Sukhsagar concluded his speech with the following remarks: "I ask you to

45. *The Bristol Labour Weekly*, 2.12.1944.

46. *The Bristol Labour Weekly*, 20.1.1945.

47. *The Labour Party Annual Report*, 1944, Report of the Annual Conference held in the Central Hall, Westminster, SW1, December 11th to December 15th 1944, 1944, London, Transport House, pp.185-189.

support this resolution and I appeal to the Executive to support it. I have a feeling of the greatest gratitude to the Chairman for the words he uttered in his Presidential address. Those words will leave their impress on my mind everlastingly. He said, 'India is a vast prison house' and he also said, 'The key to the opening of that prison house is in Downing Street'. With his permission, I will make just this modification: today, when Labour stands at the threshold of power, the key to the unlocking of that prison house is lying on the floor of this conference. You, as men who stand by the faith which you profess, who stand for the brotherhood of men, irrespective of colour and race, you should take up that magic key, you have the power to unlock those gates".<sup>48</sup>

With this moving plea Sukhsagar Datta deeply impressed the Conference. This resolution along with a similar resolution by Mr. J. Stanely of the Constructional Engineering Union subdued any opposition and greatly furthered the cause of Indian independence. After nearly half a century of a struggle which had seen the long imprisonment of his brother Ullaskar, the successful acceptance of these resolutions was the most important achievement for Dr. Datta. In the *Bristol Labour Weekly* of 23 December 1944, Jim Baty paid a special tribute to Sukhsagar for his "finest speech" which enhanced the prestige of the Borough Party. For Sukhsagar, it was participation in a political process which was to see the fulfilment of a cherished dream of Indian independence.

On 15 August 1947 India became an independent nation. For Sukhsagar Datta, this was one of the most important days in his life, a feeling which many of his Indian and English friends shared. To mark the freedom of India after more than a century of colonial rule, Dr. Datta and his Indian and British friends founded the Bristol Indian Association.<sup>49</sup> A ceremonial dinner at the Grand Hotel in Bristol marked the birth of the Association. A number of middle class Indians, some married to English women, joined the Association. The Indian members were Mr. and Mrs. Godivala, Dr. Prakash Mediratta, Professor M.G.K. Menon, recently a scientific adviser to the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Sen, Mr. and Mrs. Sanyasi, Mr. and Mrs. Ahluwalia, Dr. and Mrs. Mohan and a

48. *Ibid.*, p.186.

49. Peter Hardie (ed.), *Rammohan Roy: Commemoration of 150th Anniversary of his Death in Bristol on 27th September 1833*, 1983 Bristol, Bristol Indian Association provides an outline of events the Association had organised to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Raja Rammohan Roy's death in the city.

fair number of Indian students resident in Bristol. For Sukhsagar Datta, the Association marked the independence of India for which he and numerous Indian nationalists and their British supporters had struggled for more than fifty years.

Since 1947, the Bristol Indian Association has remained a lively organisation. In its formation, it encompassed the deep concern Sukhsagar and others had felt for the independence of India on the one hand and issues which were increasingly going to affect the social life of migrants from India to Bristol, who unlike Sukhsagar and his associates, were responding to a stimulus causing mass migration to postwar Britain. In spanning these two dimensions, the Association has made a transition from being a middle class body to being an association which has recruited members from a wider social spectrum, thus reflecting the changing pattern of migration to Bristol before and after the Second World War. As for the present development of the Association beyond the life span of Dr. Datta, it is obvious that different phases of migration to Bristol from the subcontinent as well as from East and Central Africa have influenced it. The nature of this influence and its consequences forms a separate chapter in the history of the Indian population in Bristol.

Sukhsagar remained Life President of the Bristol and Indian Association. He retired from work in 1956 and having been away from India for more than half a century, he went on six months' tour of India with Ruby to see for himself the social and political reality of free India. The notes he made during his journey show that he was looking at the subcontinent in terms of ideas and concepts formed during his long experience of Labour politics. He saw the new nation facing numerous problems and struggling to maintain cohesion. He felt that secularism and a common language combined with modern economic development could provide a firm basis for the nation. In his notes he says "Fifty years ago, the dream of a free Indian nation seemed to be just a cry of the heart. Here I am treading the soil of free India by the side of my wife".<sup>50</sup> No doubt, apart from realisation of Ullaskar's dream to see India free, a unique moment of history was being captured in Sukhsagar and Ruby's visit to India.

In his retirement, both Sukhsagar and Ruby took up ballroom dancing under the auspices of the Imperial Society of Dancing

50. From a set of personal notes Dr. Sukhsagar Datta kept during his visit to India.



Incorporated at Stoke Bishop and District Dance Club. They were awarded the Bronze Medal for the level of excellence they had achieved. Dr. Datta also undertook the study of Sanskrit and comparative religion compiling a volume of notes on Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism. Whether this interest in the subject was influenced by the final stage of life when the Hindus often turn their attention to religious matters or by scholarly curiosity is difficult to establish. After a brief illness, Sukhsagar Datta died on 3 November 1967 at the age of 76 in Bristol.

To sum up, both historians and sociologists who focus on race and ethnic relations in Britain will find that a biography such as this, rooted in history, is likely to enhance our understanding of the Indian presence in Britain. Some scholars and students assume that the settlement of Asians and Afro-Caribbeans is essentially a post-war phenomenon. This assumption in contemporary account of British Indians often masks the fact that Indians were coming to Britain throughout the course of nineteenth century and that individuals like Sukhsagar Datta with a middle class background and cosmopolitan outlook were permanently settling in Britain. In view of this pattern, any historically minded sociologist or a social anthropologist has to revise his chronological concept of Indian settlement in Britain so that the course of his inquiry does not remain artificially confined to recent mass migration only. To explain the British settlement of individuals like Dr. Datta, one has to take a perspective from which to study the effects of British rule in India and the nature of interaction between Britons and Indians. In this relationship, one can also trace a historical continuity, and, as in this instance, a link between Bengalis and Bristolians spanning a good part of nineteenth century. As this biographical sketch illustrates, opposition to British rule in India arises as an important element in stimulating Sukhsagar Datta's move to London and his eventual settlement in Bristol. His political desire to see India free and independent draws him to politics and to the Labour Party. Formation of the Bristol Indian Association marked freedom for India for everyone concerned irrespective of their national or ethnic origin. Although Indians played a leading part in the development of Bristol Indian Association, many Bristolians of English origin were involved in its activities, thus giving it a more universal character. Within the Association, the relationship between its Indian and non-Indian members alike was more clearly distinguished by a common social class background than by considerations of ethnic affiliation. The

fact that many Indians including Dr. Datta were married to English women helped to emphasise the relatively non-ethnic nature of this voluntary association. As the post-war migration began to stimulate the creation of well-defined primary groups, factors of ethnic origin later began to bear on activities of the Association. This biographical account shows that the transformation of India and the changes in the historical relationship between India and Britain were mirrored in the lives of individuals like Dr Datta and their sentiments in turn were extended to the activities of the Bristol Indian Association.







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